

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

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FM AMCONSUL PORT MORESBY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0071

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT MORESBY 0130

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PN

SUBJECT: POLITICAL REALIGNMENT AND MANEUVERING IN PNG

REF: PORT MORESBY 0085

1. CREATION OF NEW GUINEA COUNTRY PARTY ANNOUNCED BEFORE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY AUGUST 20. LEADER IS SINAKE GIREGIRE DEFECTING UNITED PARTY MEMBER FROM EASTERN HIGHLANDS DISTRICT AND DEPUTY LEADER IS MICHAEL PONDROS POKAGOU DEFECTING PANGU PARTY MEMBER FROM MANUS. EIGHTEEN "FOUNDATION MEMBERS" ANNOUNCED MOSTLY UNDISTINGUISHED UNITED PARTY BACKBENCHERS FROM CHIMBU, EASTERN, SOUTHERN, AND WESTERN HIGHLANDS DISTRICTS. PRESS INDICATED THAT SIX OF THE NAMES ANNOUNCED BEFORE THE HOUSE HAVE DENIED MEMBERSHIP IN THE COUNTRY PARTY, AND THAT THE SPEAKER HAD REQUESTED PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS OF THE COUNTRY PARTY TO GIVE SIGNED RESIGNATION STATEMENTS TO THEIR FORMER PARTIES. IT NOW APPEARS THAT THE COUNTRY PARTY MEMBERSHIP MAY HAVE DWINDLED TO LESS THAN NINE. PRESS SEES PARTY AS POWER BID BY BACKBENCHERS  
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RATHER THAN DOCTRINAL MOVEMENT.

2. GIREGIRE WAS FORMER MINISTER FOR POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS UNDER UNITED PARTY MINISTRY IN 2ND HOUSE. ONCE FRONT-BENCH STRONG MAN, HIS INFLUENCE IN U.P. HAS BEEN WANING. HE IS THE ONLY CONSTITUTIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBER INCLUDED IN INITIAL COUNTRY PARTY MEMBERSHIP.

3. POLOFF DISCUSSED SITUATION WITH TOP ECHELON UNITED PARTY REP CONSIDERED RELIABLE ON 22 AUGUST. UP REP CONVINCED FATHER MOMIS AND JOHN KAPUTIN WHO HAVE LONG DESIRED ESTABLISH PARTY BASED ON MORE NATIONALIST ELEMENT CPC MEMBERSHIP ARE BEHIND ESTABLISHMENT COUNTRY PARTY. REALIZING THEIR RADICAL IMAGE WOULD FRIGHTEN BACKBENCHERS, DISSATISFIED UNITED PARTY MEMBER GIREGIRE, WHO HAS CONSIDERABLE INFLUENCE WITH HIGHLANDS BACKBENCHERS WAS USED TO ORGANIZE NEW PARTY. GIREGIRE PROMOTED COUNTRY PARTY BY PROMISING SEMI-EDUCATED BACKBENCHERS THEY WOULD BECOME MINISTERS WHEN PARTY TOOK CONTROL GOVERNMENT. ONCE COUNTRY PARTY FORMED, MOMIS AND KAPUTIN WERE TO LEAD CPC MEMBERSHIP INTO COUNTRY PARTY, DOMINATE IT, AND THEREBY ESTABLISH A FORMAL CPC POLITICAL BASE IN HOUSE. ON EVENING AUGUST 21 KAPUTIN AND MOMIS OVERPLAYED HAND BY INVITING ALL COUNTRY PARTY MEMBERS TO MEETING, WHICH HOWEVER ONLY GIREGIRE ATTENDED. THIS MIS-CALCULATION SEEMS TO HAVE FRIGHTENED OFF COUNTRY PARTY BACKBENCHERS AND RESULTED IN SEVERAL RETURNING TO UP FOLD.

4. HAVING FAILED TO FORM COUNTRY PARTY AS EFFECTIVE INSTRUMENT, MOMIS AND KAPUTIN PLAN TO ANNOUNCE YET ANOTHER PARTY COMPOSED OF CPC MEMBERS ON AUGUST 23RD. THEY WILL ASSERT THAT THE NEW PARTY (AS YET UNNAMED) AND COUNTRY PARTY ARE NOT ASSOCIATED, BUT WILL ATTEMPT HAVE GIREGIRE CO-ORDINATE COUNTRY PARTY MEMBERS WITH CPC-DOMINATED GROUP. QUESTION NOW AT FOREFRONT IS WHETHER THESE NEW DEVELOPMENTS WILL SO REDUCE COALITION NUMBERS AS TO REQUIRE

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RESTRUCTURING POLITICAL PARTIES HERE. UP REP BELIEVES UNITED PARTY HAS 50-50 CHANCE ENTERING COALITION WITH SOMARE AND LESS RADICAL MEMBERS PANGU BY END SEPTEMBER HOUSE MEETING. UNITED CAN OFFER FOUR-FIVE MINISTERIAL CANDIDATES WITH FORMER MINISTERIAL QUALIFICATIONS, SEVERAL OF WHOM ARE FROM HIGHLANDS. UNITED WILL HAVE TO SHOCK SOMARE INTO REALIZING HOW MUCH HAS BEEN DEPENDENT ON QUIET

SUPPORT FROM TEI ABEL, AND OTHER UP LEADERSHIP, WHO RATHER THAN ATTEMPT TO BRING COALITION DOWN HAVE SUPPORTED SOMARE IN ORDER THAT FIRST HOME RULE MINISTRY NOT FALL, THEREBY CREATING PATTERN OF INSTABILITY IN FUTURE PNG POLITICS.

5. COMMENT: EARLIER PREDICTION OF A RESTRUCTURING OF PNG POLITICS HAVE BEEN REPORTED (PORT MORESBY 0085). THE EARLIER ASSUMPTION WAS THAT SOMARE WAS INDESPENSIBLE AND THEREFORE WOULD CONTINUE TO BE ABLE TO HOLD HIS DISPARATE COALITION TOGETHER. THE SITUATION IS INCREASINGLY FLUID HERE, HOWEVER, AND THIS ASSUMPTION CANNOT BE TAKEN AS A GIVEN. THE MOMIS, KAPUTIN FACTION HERE IS FEARED BY MODERATES IN ALL PARTIES AND THE ATTEMPT TO BUILD A CPC POWER BASE EXPECTED. GIVEN GIREGIRE'S AMBITIONS AND HIS INFLUENCE WITH SEMI-LITERATE HIGHLANDERS IT IS POSSIBLE THAT HE HAS BEEN ABLE TO PERSUADE THEM INTO BELIEVING THAT MINISTERIAL PORTFOLIOS WILL SOON BE THEIRS.  
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## Message Attributes

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